

UDC - 78

## FROM FOLK SOURCE TO PROFESSIONAL CREATION: ON ONE TUSHETIAN TUNE

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### **Summary:**

*The article discusses the distribution area and development of one Tushetian tune mostly known as Mtsqemsuri. Today unison performance of this polyphonic melody, by nature, is explained as a decline of the process of Georgian traditional polyphonic thinking. The article also touches upon the examples of academic music, folk-jazz, author's folklore, popular genre, which are successful or unsuccessful attempts of arranging the folk source.*

**Keywords:** *Georgian (Tushetian) music, mtsqemsuri, Arjevnishvili, Tsintsadze, Erkomaishvili, Ebralidze.*

When researching Georgian-North Caucasian parallels in addition to archival materials preserved at the Georgian Folk Music Laboratory we got familiarized with the audio recordings copied by ethnomusicologist Manana Shilakadze from the archives of Dagestan State Television and Radio Committee in 1981. These included a *panduri* piece entitled “Georgian motive” performed by renowned Avarian folk professional Ramazan Magomedov (audio ex. N1). This is the tune that Sul Khan Tsintsadze used in one of his quartet miniatures “Mtsqemsuri” (Shepherd’s song), which is the final fifth part (*Simghera; Gaprindi, shavo mertskhalo; Satsekvao; Khumroba, Mtsqemsuri*) of the quartet suite composed in 1951 (audio ex. N2). Sul Khan Tsintsadze’s miniatures are more or less discussed in musicological literature. All authors unanimously recognize their folk basis, but the specific source of *Mtsqemsuri* is not indicated anywhere [1:47]; [2:107, 111]; [3:74, 75, 90, 94].

The notated version of the tune published by the Republican House of Folk Art in 1964 is entitled *Tushuri satrpialo* (Tushetian love song), with well-known singer, choir master and virtuoso *panduri* player Mariam Arjevnishvili (1918-1958) indicated as the author (her husband Geronti Tughushi is the author of the verbal text) (notated ex. N1).

A few years before publishing this notated version Grigol Ckhikvadze refers to Arjevnishvili as a recorder-arranger of vocal and instrumental music, as well as the author of a number of original works; Ckhikvadze, who speaks about “true national character” of Arjevnishvili’s creative work, names her as the author of *Mtsqemsuri* [4:4].

In special radio program dedicated to Mariam Arjevnishvili in 2014, the presenters and guests, basing on Grigol Kokeladze’s article, also talked about *Tushuri satrpialo* as Arjevnishvili’s song [5]; [6]. According to Kokeladze “Maro Arjevnishvili composed many good songs. *Mtsqemsuri* is an example of the first period, which she initially composed for solo performance, later arranged for a female-male duet – *Netavi shens mzes*a (O, you are my sunshine), but in the end this developed into a wonderful choral song via best combination of Georgian folk instruments – *salamuri, chuniri, changi, chonguri* and *panduri* [7:55].

Despite the fact confirming Maro Arjevnishvili’s authorship, we continued searching for the materials, because we presumed that this was a folk tune. In the archive of the Folklore State Centre we found the manuscript of the song under the title *Kalo, netavi shens mzes*a (O girl, you are my sunshine). The subtitles – *Tushebis satrpialo* (Tushetian love song) and *Mtsqemsuri* (Shepherd’s song) explain its origin, subject and genre (notated ex. N2). Unlike the publication the manuscript refers to Arjevnishvili not as the author, but the person who recorded/documentated and arranged the

song. This statement cannot be doubted, as it also indicates the folk performer of the example - a Chaghma-Tushetian Babe Beridze, as well as the place – Zemo alvani and date – 15 January, 1946 – of recording. Shalva Mshvelidze's inscription on the manuscript (1948) confirms that Arjevnishvili did not compose the song, but arranged it. I.e. this is the information, which was not included in the published version and without which it is impossible to correctly define Arjevnishvili's role for this song.

The afore-mentioned manuscript and the published example recognized as Arjevnishvili's creation differ from each other. The manuscript is a three-part song without instrumental accompaniment, its first part is recorded as a female-male duet. Simultaneous sounding of two voice-parts in phrase II is completely constructed on parallel seconds and unison. This initially made us think that this could possibly be a dialogue between a woman and a man, which, for any reason, was documented as a score, the more so as it sounds without bass part and it is unclear part of which chords these intervals could be. However the published variant precisely repeats top parts of the manuscript, which means that the female and male voice-parts sound simultaneously and the score was documented correctly. The difference is that, the published example is accompanied with *panduri* (in the function of bass) and *salamuri* from the beginning. Another distinctive feature is meter-rhythm. The meter of two and dotted rhythm in the manuscript add cheerful, march-like nature, non-characteristic of the genre, to the tune.

The fact that the tune is folk, more precisely Tushetian, is confirmed primarily by its musical regularities, including the principle of sequential development characteristic to Tushetian music. The titles are also directly associated with Tusheti, because of basic activity of the population of this region – shepherding. So we started searching for parallels in the expedition audio recordings and notations. The songs recorded in 1947 by Shalva Aslanishvili's expedition in Tusheti turned out to be the earliest; they are included in volume II of Aslanishvili's essays (1956): *Metskhvaris simghera* N13 (Shepherd's song), *Es shemodgoma movida* N14 (The Autumn has come), *Jariskatsis simghera* NN25-27 (Soldier's song), *Me var da chemi nabadi* N34 (My nabadi<sup>1</sup> and I) [7:170, 171, 181, 182]. For clarity we present notated versions of three examples, documented in the same pitch. These are: *Kartuli motivi* (Georgian motive) recorded in Daghestan, notated by us: Arjevnishvili's *Kalo, netavi shens mzes*a (and Aslanishvili's *Es shemodgoma movida* (notated ex. NN3-5).

The tunes are obviously identical. Arjevnishvili's songs and notated folk variants (*Metskhvaris simghera* N13; *Es shemodgoma movida* N14; *Jariskatsis simghera* N25, N27; the published *Jariskatsis simghera* N26) have the following similarities: ascending stepwise movement from the third of the mode to fifth and repetitive consolidation of fifth, the range of sixth, sequence-type descent from fifth to the central tone, stop at the end of each phrase, multiple repetition of the central tone, swinging meter of the tune. The songs documented by Aslanishvili with complex meter (5/4, 7/4+6/4, 9/8) more or less show free meter of Tushetian tune in general. The notated examples are either single- or two-part, whilst Arjevnishvili's variants are three-part.

Sadly, audio versions of these songs were not included in the recordings of wax cylinders published in the 2000s. Possible reason for this may be mechanical damage of the cylinder and/or irreparable technical flaw.

The audio recordings were made later (1959-1965) and in addition to Tusheti (1965, 1967, Kakhi Rosebashvili) they were also made in other parts of Georgia: Tianeti (1959, Mindia Zhordania), Achara (1959, Vladimir Akhobadze) and Khevi (1960, M. Zhordania). All the recordings are instrumental pieces mainly played on *panduri* or *salamuri* and also on *garmoni*. Only the Acharan example is played on *chonguri* (audio ex. NN3-5). Most frequently encountered titles *Tushuri* and *Msqemsuri* point to regional and genre belonging of the tune, two examples *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* (I am playing the flute in mountains) and *Vazhao* (O, Vazha) – to its vocal origin. The pieces for *garmoni* also have titles – *Tushuri satrpialo* and *Mgzavruli* (Traveller's). The

<sup>1</sup> Nabadi – Georgian traditional wool cloak.

source recorded by M. Arjevnishvili from Babe Beridze may also have had vocal origin, because from the same person Arjevnishvili also recorded lament of Tushetian women (the handwritten notation is preserved at the archive of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia). The keener was supposed to be a singer as well.

Among the listed instrumental pieces relatively different is the Acharan example, as the melody has the dancing features characteristic for the music of this region. The fact of dissemination only in Achara, of all West-Georgian regions, can be explained by the simplicity of musical language of this dialect, certain proximity to the East Georgian (which led to the acceptance of this simple melody) and by the issue of shepherding familiar to Achara. Relatively distant similarity is also observed in other audio recordings, some of which were made much earlier than the 1950s.

A number of examples introduced in concert performance practice echoe to the authorship issue of the songs nourished from folk motives, particularly popular among them – Anzor Erkomaishvili's *Tu ase turpa iqavi* (I did not know you were so beautiful), constructed on the tune well-known to us (audio ex. N6). In order to demonstrate the difference we made this author's song and computer audio version of the notated folk example *Es shemodgoma movida* (audio ex. N7) sound simultaneously (audio ex. N8). The result showed that musical parameters of the song were mainly unchanged.

By the way, the same song but with different verbal text and title – *Simghera intskirvetze* (Song about village of Intskirveti) – was also recorded in Achara (Shuakhevi district) by N. Zumbadze (2016). The performers think that the song is from their province (audio ex. N9).

Obviously, the tune of *Mtsqemsuri* is still popular. But how is as Chkhikvadze says Mariam's song distinguished in "subtle taste" and "rare intuition" performed today? As an example here we would like to mention unison example performed in Mount Katriani, and again in Achara (audio ex. N10). The fact, that in the home of polyphony, where two-part songs traditionally performed by *mtkmeli* (top voice) and bass, the melody is not sung even as simple two-part – by parallel thirds, indicates to the decline of polyphonic thinking.

Shepherd's tune penetrated into popular genre as well. We would also like to note the song *Sad midiodi, netavi?* (I wonder where were you going) performed by Nino Chkheidze, with the arrangement typical for the performer's style, and Irine Ebralidze's composition *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* for female quintet – a folk-jazz example (2012)<sup>2</sup> (notated ex. N6, audio ex. N11, N12). If the first song is an example of the decline in musical taste, the other can be considered a successful attempt of arranging folk source. By the way, Ebralidze also repeats the wide-spread opinion that the tune is an author's folk example. Also interesting is that in the radio program dedicated to Arjevnishvili the change of Geronti Tughushi's verbal text by Chkheidze was estimated as copyright infringement.

It is known, that the issue of authorship is one of the basic features of distinction between professional and folk creative work. In rural life each performer of oral traditional musical example is also its co-author, because, as a rule, he/she makes certain change in the example sung or played earlier and interpreted by others. The performer's contribution increases according to his/her talent and mastery. Maybe, this is why, distinguished masters are considered the authors of the examples they sing.

Let's go back to the tune of our interest. Is it truly "author's", as noted in the notated collection from 1964? Despite the fact, that we do not know the specific source (whether it is vocal or instrumental, single- or multi-part), we would refer to Arjevnishvili's variants as arranged, but not author's. It is obvious that Arjevnishvili played a decisive role in the popularization of the tune. As Chkhikvadze notes, it was thanks to her that the society got familiarized with East Georgian mountain regions (Tushetian-Pshavian-Khevsuretian) folk music [4:4].

<sup>2</sup> We thank ethnomusicologist Tamaz Gabisonia for this audio recording.

As for S. Tsintsadze, he maintained the folk nature (simplicity, couplet-form) of the piece and also enriched it with the means of classical music (harmony, timbre, register).

What did Tsintsadze listen to? Presumably, he had not seen Arjevnishvili's manuscript preserved at the Republican House of Folk Art, but it is hard to imagine that he had not heard the ensemble of Georgian folk instruments directed by Arjevnishvili, which had existed at the State Philharmonic Society of Georgia since 1946. It is known that alongside other examples, in the ensemble's repertoire particularly successful were *Vazho*, *netavi shens mzes* and *Tushuri satrpialo*. It should also be mentioned that in 1947-1951 Arjevnishvili directed a group of *panduri* players of the State Song and Dance Ensemble of Georgia [7:54], the repertoire of which definitely included the example of our interest. All the more that it was frequently broadcasted on radio and it should have become the source of the composer's inspiration this way. It is also impossible not to mention Arjevnishvili's magnificent performance on *panduri*, completely nourished by folk tradition (audio ex. N13, N14).

The discussed Tushetian tune is best known throughout Georgia thanks in Arjevnishvili's interpretation. It should have been spread in the former Soviet space by media (radio) as well. In general, North-Caucasian traces are observed in Tushetian music, but in this case, as seen from the title *Georgian motive* played by a Dagestan musician had been studied from Georgian source more precise

### Appendix

1. *Tushuri satrpialo*. Music by M. Arjevnishvili. Fragment. Republican House of Folk Art. Tbilisi, 1964.

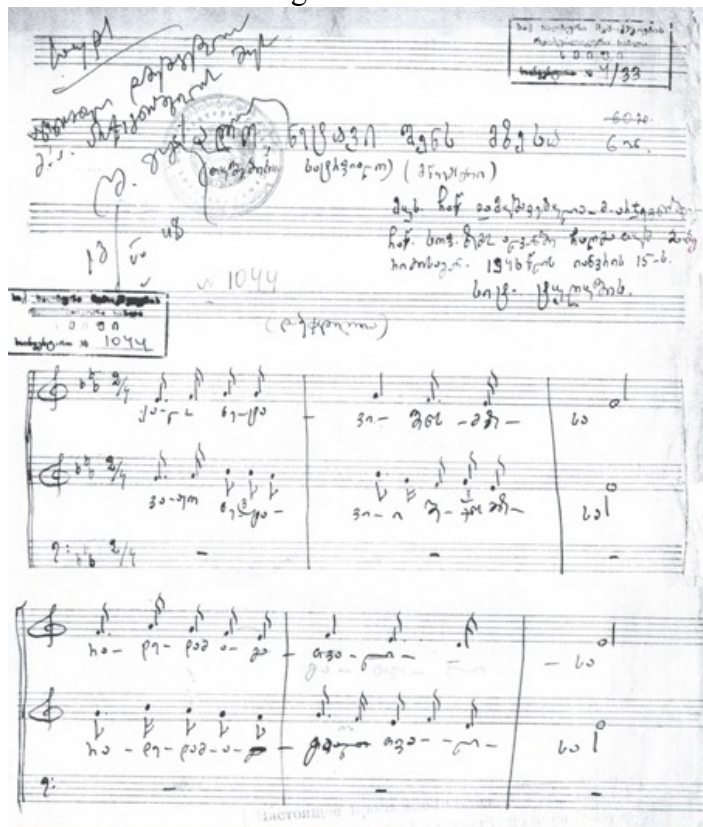
თუშური  
სატრპილო

ბანაბი. ბ. ბუღუშის ავსია. მ. არევიშვილის  
ზომიერად.

სარამური  
უანდური

*mf*

2. *Kalo, netavi shens mzesა*. Documented and arranged by M. Arjevnishvili. Manuscript, 1948. Archive of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia.



3. *Georgian melody*. Recorded in Avaria, Daghestan. Notated by N. Zumbadze.



4. *Kalo, netavi shens mzesა*. Arranged by M. Arjevnishvili.



5. *Es shemodgoma movida*. Sh. Aslanishvili, *Essays on Georgian Folk Songs*, II. 1956. 1956:171.



6. Irine Ebralidze. *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* (for female quintet a capella).

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ი.ებრალიძე

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**Audio examples**

1. *Georgian melody* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Performed by Ramazan Magomedov. Copied by Manana Shilakadze from the archive of Daghestan State Radio and Television Committee, 1981. Preserved at the Archive of Georgian Folk Music Laboratory of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (further on: AGFML).

2. Tsintsadze S. *Mtsqemsuri*. A fragment. Performed by Georgian State String Quartet. <https://www.music7s.com/search.php?search=%D1%81%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BD+%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%B5&count=50&sort=2> (07.06.2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjus7XaDymA> (07.06.2019)

3. *Mtsqemsuri* (on *tongueless salamuri*). A fragment. Performed by Shalva Javakhishvili. Recorded by Mindia Zhordania. Tianeti district, village of Tolenji, 1959. AGFML.

4. *Tushuri satrpialo* (on *garmoni*). A fragment. Performed by Zhenia Nakudaide. Recorded by Kakhi Rosebashvili. Akhmeta district, village of Kvemo Alvani, 1967. AGFML.

5. *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* (on *chonguri*). A fragment. Recorded by Vladimer Akhobadze. Batumi, 1959. AGFML.

6. Erkomaishvili A. *Tu ase turpa iqavi* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Performed by ensemble *Rustavi*. Audio album *Anzor Erkomaishvili-70*. CD 2-4.

7. *Jariskatsis simghera*. Computer version by Ketevan Matiashvili. Tbilisi, 2019.

8. *Tu ase turpa iqavi & Jariskatsis simghera*. Overlapping version by K. Matiashvili. A fragment. Tbilisi, 2019.

9. *Simghera Intskirvetze* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Performed by female trio from village of Intskirveti. Recorded by Natalia Zumbadze. Shuakhevi district, village of Khabelashvilebi, 2016. Archive of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia.

10. *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Shuakhevi district, Mount Katriani. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tf2eziqs4k> (07.06.2019).

11. *Sad midiodi, netavi*. A fragment. Performed by Nino Chkheidze. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yV5IzvjCqc> (07.06.2019).
12. Ebralidze I. *Mtashi salamurs vakvneseb* (for female quintet a capella). A fragment. Performed by quintet *Geo-drive*: Irine Ebralidze (soloist), Nino Sadradze, Nia Undilashvili, Nino Akhobadze, Tamta Gvarliani. 2012.
13. *Mtsqemsuri* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Arranged by M. Arjevnishvili. *State radio*. 18.11.2014. *Mariam Arjevnishvili*, part I. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WiSiIPNCCs> (07.06.2019).
14. *Tushuri* (on *panduri*). A fragment. Performed by Leo Osepashvili. Recorded by Mindia Zhordania. Tianeti district, village of Khevsurtsopeli, 1959.

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2. Mgaloblishvili T. *Sulkhan Tsintsadze's Miniatures for String Quartet*. In the collection *Issues of Music Theory*. Tbilisi: *Khelovneba*, 1982.
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